DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 378 519 CG 025 922

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TITLE Mentoring: A Vital Ingredient for Career Success.
PUB DATE 15 Aug 94
NOTE 16p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Psychological Association (102nd, Los Angeles, CA, August 12-16, 1994).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Information Analyses (070)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Career Development; Careers; College Students; Graduate Students; Graduate Study; Higher Education; Interpersonal Relationship; *Mentors; Modeling (Psychology); *Professional Development; Teacher Student Relationship
IDENTIFIERS *Protege Mentor Relationship; *Proteges

ABSTRACT

Mentoring has a long and distinguished history dating back to ancient times. This paper provides an overview of the mentoring process, reviews the pertinent literature, and discusses the implications of mentoring for new entrants into the field of psychology. Research suggests there are two types of mentors: formal and informal. Formal mentors facilitate a young adult's advancement and development, while informal mentors provide mentoring functions because they derive personal satisfaction from the mentoring relationship. These various functions mentors perform for their proteges may be classed into two broad categories: psychosocial and career. Psychosocial help includes efforts which enhance proteges' sense of competence, identity, and effectiveness in their professional roles. Career functions include those actions which enhance career advancement as a result of the mentor's experience, sponsorship, protection, and influence. Nevertheless, although numerous studies have evaluated the content, process, and outcome of mentoring relationships, little is known about their formulation. It is known that people with mentors become quickly socialized to an organization or profession, obtain high-visibility assignments, and stay abreast of future opportunities. It is concluded that potential mentors rely on proteges to initiate the relationship, and to nurture its continuance. Graduate students, in particular, should seek a mentor. Contains 24 references. (RJM)

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ED 378 519

MENTORING: A VITAL INGREDIENT FOR CAREER SUCCESS

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Presented at the 102st Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association at Los Angeles, California, August 15, 1994, 1 p.m.

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Depending upon your perspective, mentoring has many different connotations. Graduate students view a mentor as a formal advisor who dispenses information on required curricula and various career options. Others see mentoring as an informal relationship between professional colleagues or a formalized arrangement between junior and senior managers. Whatever one's viewpoint, research continues to indicate that mentoring can facilitate an individual's career progress and perceived career success (Turban & Dougherty, 1994). The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of the mentoring process, review the pertinent literature and discuss the implications of this for new entrants in the field of psychology. The unique nuances of academic and private practice settings will also be noted with specific recommendations for obtaining and sustaining mentoring relationships.

Overview of Mentoring Functions

The practice of mentoring has a long and distinguished history dating back to ancient times. Derived from Greek mythology, the word mentor implies a relationship between a young adult and an older, more experienced one for the purposes of imparting knowledge, support and counsel. Mentoring is actually the relationship that unfolds to support the young protege's personal and professional development, enabling them to address the challenges encountered throughout adulthood. Today, mentoring is a popular method for incorporating previously disenfranchised groups (women and minorities) into organizational structures.

Research indicates that there are two types of mentors (formal and informal) and two primary mentoring functions: psychosocial and career (Kram, 1985; Noe,1988). A formal mentor is one who has been designated specifically for the purpose of facilitating a young adult's advancement and development. Examples of this type of

relationship include: graduate student-advisor, subordinate-manager, or protege-executive. Companies, such as Tenneco, have incented executives to participate in mentoring-style affirmative action programs by linking their bonuses to protege development. The outcome of such a relationship is presumed to benefit the protege in their subsequent career progress and success, while the organization gains a seasoned and competent executive. University faculty assume responsibility for graduate students' academic development as part of their professional activities, while managers provide mentor-like support for new subordinates.

In contrast, an informal mentor is someone who provides mentoring functions because they derive personal satisfaction or some type of intrinsic benefit from the mentoring relationship. Older peers, research colleagues, group practice associates, or senior executives could be examples of this type of association. The outcome of these relationships are mutually beneficial to the participants. Research conducted by Noe (1988) indicates that the majority of mentoring relationships are informal .

Whichever type of relationship exists, mentors assist proteges by performing various functions for them (Schein, 1978; Clawson, 1979; Davis & Garrison, 1979; Phillips, 1982; Missirian,1982; Kram, 1980). Kram (1985) has summarized these functions into two broad categories: Psychosocial and Career. Psychosocial includes those aspects of the relationship which enhance a protege's sense of competence, identity, and effectiveness in their professional role. These functions can include role modeling, acceptance-confirmation, counseling and friendship but they are all predicated on a close interpersonal relationship that fosters mutual trust. Career functions are those aspects of the mentoring relationship which enhance career advancement as a result of the mentor's experience, sponsorship, protection, and

influence. Ideally, the "best" mentoring relationships combine both psychosocial and career functions, but it is not uncommon for one function to dominant the relationship (Noe, 1988). Proteges can also have multiple mentors (formal and informal) to provide the spectrum of functions desired.

Recent Research

There have been numerous studies geared to evaluating the content, process, and outcome of mentoring relationships but little is known about their formulation. A survey of mentoring research since 1983 reveals seven studies which linked mentoring with either career success (as measured by salary and # of promotions) or early career progress (Clawson & Cram, 1984; Cram, 1985; Riley & Wrench, 1985; Dreher & Ash, 1990; White, Dougherty & Dreher, 1991; Scandura, 1992; Turban & Dougherty, 1994). Other outcomes included higher self-confidence and "an enhanced awareness of and use of skills" among women mentored (Reich, 1986) and less job stress for all proteges, particularly if they did not have a peer group (Nelson & Quick, 1985).

In terms of personal characteristics, Hunt & Michael (1983) found that mentors are usually older than their proteges by approximately 8-15 years. Proteges who are most similar to their mentors, in terms of socioeconomic, educational, and cultural backgrounds, received the "best" mentoring, because they usually had higher level mentors and those mentors included them in after-hours socializing (Viator & Scandura, 1991). Women received less after-hours mentoring due to increased sensitivity to perceived sexual overtones (Ragins & Cotton, 1991).

The personality characteristics of proteges has been a recent subject of research. Fagenson (1992) found that proteges generally had a higher need for achievement and power than did nonproteges. Turban & Dougherty (1994) indicated that proteges

with an internal locus of control, high self-monitoring, high emotional stability and low negative affectivity, were more likely to initiate mentoring relationships and as a result directly influence the amount of mentoring received.

While there is no significant difference in the overall amount of mentoring received, woman receive more psychosocial mentoring than do men (Noe, 1988; Dreher & Ash, 1990). Mentored women and men report approximately the same number of promotions but men earn an average of $7,900 more per year (Turban & Dougherty, 1992). Chao, Walz & Gardner (1992) noted that informally mentored proteges received more career-related support from their mentors and higher salaries than formally or nonmentored individuals.

Due to naivete and a lack of female role models women have failed to seek out mentoring relationships, when compared to men, (Brown, 1985). As more female executives become mentors this is expected to change. This is indicated by a recent Gallup survey (1994) of 561 executive and professional women which found that women under 35 were more likely to have mentors than their older counterparts (60% to 48%). While the majority (56%) of their mentors were women, this was not the case for women earning between $45,000-75,000 per year. These high earners had male mentors because of the differential that still exists at the higher corporate levels (Gutek, 1993). The ways in which women mentored women included recommending them for promotions, assisting with job offers, and introducing the protege to other industry professionals.

Cross-gender and cross-race mentoring has also received increased attention. Proteges in gender heterogeneous dyad were more effective in mentor utilization (ie. received more psychosocial and career support) than proteges in homogeneous

dyads (Noe, 1988). Yet Ragins and McFarlin (1990) found no differences between cross-gender and same-gender relationships in three areas of psychosocial support, (counseling, friendship and parenting), and one area of career support (acceptance). Research also indicates that cross-gender and same-race relationships last longer than do same-gender and cross-race mentoring relationships (Thomas & Alderfer, 1989). Thomas & Alderfer (1989) also found that African-American proteges form the majority of their developmental relationships with whites and are more likely to obtain mentors outside of the formal lines of authority and their departments. Same-race relationships provided more psychosocial development than did cross-race, yet they were rarer for African-American proteges.

Current research reflects several gaps in our knowledge base. For example, attention needs to be devoted to the dynamics of initiating and forming a mentoring relationship. More research is also indicated to address the unique needs of minorities. In addition, professionals outside of the business realm need to be included in future surveys to increase our understanding of cross-industry differences in mentoring relationships. From all indications, this is being remedied with research currently in progress (Dougherty, personal communication 1994).

Professionals and researchers alike seem to agree that mentoring is a key ingredient for career success. In summary, people with mentors become quickly socialized to an organization or profession, obtain high-visibility assignments, stay well informed of future opportunities, and are coached to "success". Yet within the psychological profession, there is no formal mentoring process and little attention paid to the professional development of students outside of program requirements. Many of us expect a supervisor or advisor to fulfill this role, but mentoring is a much more

complex phenomenon than supervision or advising. The next section will address current trends that are having an impact on mentoring arrangements

Contemporary Trends

In 1990, the APA had 70,266 members, of whom 27,389 or 39% were women (Hogan & Sexton, 1991). APA divisions with the highest population of female participants included: Psychology of Women, 96%; Developmental Psychology, 51% and Psychoanalysis, 50%. Those with the lowest female membership were: Military Psychology, 11%; Applied Experimental and Engineering Psychology, 12%; and Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology, 15%. In 1986, graduate psychology departments reported that 58% of students in research programs and 66% of students in practice programs were women though concern regarding fewer women entering academic settings is still valid and persistent (Mednick, 1991). The "feminization" of psychology, as a trend, is expected to continue though minorities have not fared as well (Ostertag & McNamara, 1991). From 1980-1990, only 8.2% of all psychology doctorates earned went to minorities (African-American, 3.8%; Hispanic-American, 2.8%; Asian-American, 1.3%; and Native American, 0.3%) (Wyche & Graves, 1992). Interestingly, more minority women than men received doctorates in psychology. Despite the changing demographics of psychology, positions in APA organizations and on university faculties are still dominated by white males (Hogan & Sexton, 1991). Leadership and faculty positions are indicative of career progress and success and as such are relevant to a discussion of mentoring.

Insight into the professional development of APA members was provided by Cohen & Gutek, (1991) in their survey of 534 members of Division 35 (Psychology of Women) and 9 (Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues). Their results indicate that

men are more likely to receive assistance from faculty in the areas of job assistance and placement and in providing personal support. Men were also more likely to report having had a mentor during graduate school (79.5% to 61.5%). The mentor's sex was predominantly male but 38.1% of responding women and four men (3.1%) cited a female role model. Furthermore, one hundred and thirty respondents also stated they were role models for only their own sex.

In a recent survey of 268 interns, Mintz, Rideout & Bartels (1994) found that slightly more than half of all interns had experienced a mentoring relationship in either graduate school or during their internship. In contrast, positive role models were very prevalent in both settings with over four-fifths of all respondents having had at least one. While no gender differences were noted for reports of role models and mentors, there were some gender differences regarding the source of the relationship. For instance, men were more likely to have a faculty role model in graduate school and during internship than were women. Men were also more likely to have a supervisor as a mentor during graduate school than were women. A t test compared the mean number of male versus female supervisors each respondent had worked with and found that male supervisors were significantly more plentiful (4.16 to 2.76). In light of all these trends, the next section will offer specific recommendations for those of us new to the field of psychology.

Implications for Graduate Students

In 1993, I began a series of qualitative interviews with counseling, social and clinical psychologists in academia and private practice. My original intent was to obtain information for my own professional development. With a background in career development and organizational behavior, I knew that a mentor was necessary to my

building a successful career in the field of psychology. I was also interested in connecting with professionals from other geographic locales, since I am not from the Midwest.

The result is that I have 10 dyad interviews completed but am still in the process of conducting more. Each interview has resulted in new information and ideas. So following in the best tradition of qualitative research, I have not quit while there is still new data to be gathered. As a result of my initial qualitative research, it is apparent that there are various ways to obtain a mentor and sustain a mentoring relationship. I will therefore summarize my initial findings and provide recommendations as to how you can incorporate a mentor into your personal and professional development.

One of the most critical aspects of my research has been trying to determine how mentoring relationships form or initiate. From my interviews, it has become very apparent that potential mentors rely on the protege to not only initiate the relationship, but also to continue it's existence. This tells us that there are perhaps many potential mentors out there waiting to be approached. Earlier research has already alerted us to the fact that proteges seek out mentors with whom they feel "comfortable" (D.S-Ewing, 1993). Hence, a protege must actively involve themselves in professional, social, and school activities if they are to know with whom they are compatible. Once compatibility is determined, a protege can then approach a potential mentor and request their assistance. The mentor-protege should have a clear understanding of what they want from each other. Research indicates that the clearer the protege is in expressing what they need, the more likely they are to receive it (D. S-Ewing, 1993).

Personal characteristics will play an important part in the relationship but a proteges' self-esteem, level of motivation, and clarity regarding career goals will be

more important determinants in successfully obtaining a mentor. A mentoring relationship will also be more likely to develop between two individuals who have common interests, personal or professional. The importance of similar hobbies should not be discounted since I was surprised at the number of mentors (5) who reported playing golf with their proteges. Conceivably, a faculty member or local psychological professional will share at least one of your interests. Widen your search outside your department, school and community, but do find at least one mentor who shares your "passions", be they sport, hobby, research, theory, religion, or political. Joining an APA division, a special interest group, or other related professional organization can also introduce you to people with similar viewpoints.

Another result of my research was the idea to seek mentors from within and around the psychology profession. For example, several respondents spoke of mentors who were in other departments (education, business, law, women's studies), other schools, and even overseas. Technology has allowed us to partially overcome time and distance. In fact, electronic mail is the second most popular method of communication between protege and mentor (after face to face). One mentor related that their protege had gone overseas on a Fullbright for three months but that hadn't diminished their contact with each other. They "talked" via e-mail every day!

The purpose of seeking mentors from within your department and the outside world is to provide yourself with several mentors (formal and informal) who can provide differing levels of psychosocial and career mentoring functions. My research indicates that most professionals have one "primary" mentor with whom they are very close on a personal and professional level, along with several other more "specialized" mentors who share one or more areas of interest with the protege. These areas may be

research topics, developmental skills, or similar work/family conflicts. Sharing similar family-role conflicts is a major source of psychosocial support for both mentor and protege. I know of an instance where a mentor and protege "pooled" their children into a daycare center and took turns dropping them and picking them up. This gave each of them some measure of freedom and saved time.

In regard to job assistance and placement, 7 of the 10 interviewees were directly responsible for their proteges' first job offer. The majority of these (4) were academic positions though not on the same campus. Do not underestimate the amount or type of contacts that your mentor has. Their professional networks can often assist you after you have graduated. At the very least you will need letters of recommendation and references. It is preferable to obtain these from someone who knows you well versus only slightly via a class.

In conclusion, there should be no doubt that a mentor is necessary during graduate school. Preferably, you will find more than one mentor who will share similar personal and professional interests with you, as well as, possessing personality characteristics that are compatible with yours. Looking beyond your immediate department is recommended for both diversity and professional networking considerations. Opening your horizons to new ideas, situations, and experiences can be a source of potential mentors. Taking the initiative to pursue and secure a mentorship is primarily the responsibility of the protege but you should not hesitate to do so as many mentors are just waiting to be asked. Last but not least, career success is a very individualized issue and has various meanings to different people. Career success in the main mentoring literature refers to salary increases and the number of promotions obtained in a given time period. In psychology the measurement of success could vary from

setting to setting. For example, in academic settings this may be the receipt of tenure and/or the publication of a major research contribution. In private practice it may be measured by how many clients you see each week, your rate of success (cure) or the amount of money you earn. In medical settings and clinics, this may be measured by organizational objectives, income versus expenses, or how many "repeat" clients you have. Whatever the setting, a mentor can assist you to achieve your brand of success.

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